

Remarks

After entry of the subject amendment, claims 1-56 will be pending in the application with claims 1, 29, and 41 being in independent form. Claims 1, 29, and 41 have been amended and claims 54-56 have been added. There is full support in the specification for the amendments and additions such that no new matter is being introduced.

Claims 1-14, 17-21, 23, 29-34, 37, 41-46, and 49 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaklee et al. in view of Smith et al. The remaining claims stand rejected under §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shaklee, Smith and a variety of additional references. As discussed in greater detail below, Applicant respectfully traverses the obviousness rejections of independent claims 1, 29, and 41 such that further discussion of the remaining §103 rejections is believed unnecessary.

To summarize the obviousness rejections of the independent claims 1, 29, and 41, the Examiner contends that Shaklee discloses an electric power distribution system for a vehicle. This electric power distribution system employs a power source and a bus bar connected to the power source for electrically powering one or more load devices. The Examiner contends that the load devices are readable upon the peripheral devices claimed in the subject application. The Examiner concedes that Shaklee does not disclose a number of claimed features. The Examiner contends that Smith discloses the remaining claimed features including a plurality of power modules each having connection ports. The Examiner states that Smith also discloses a microprocessor control module that controls each power module, a communication interface, and a backplane area having a plurality of identical slots. The Examiner analogizes the backplane area to the modular connector as claimed in the subject application such that the backplane area can supply power and data signals to the modules.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner has misinterpreted Shaklee and Smith and/or is overextending the disclosures of these patents. The power supply systems of Shaklee and Smith are simply that, *power supply* systems. There is no transfer of *data* to or from any of the peripheral devices. There is only a transfer of *electrical power*. Take for

example the electrical system of Shaklee. The Examiner explains that the 'peripheral devices' in Shaklee are the electrical load devices L1 - L4. These load devices, however, only receive electrical power and do NOT receive any type of data transmission. As for the power supply system of Smith, the peripheral devices are a cathode 10, screen grid 16, accelerator grid 18, and neutralizer 20. Again, these devices only receive electrical power and do NOT receive any type of data transmission.

As set forth in independent claims 1 and 29, these claims specifically require that *power and data* are transferred to the modules AND *data* is transferred to an associated peripheral device along with *power* being transferred to at least one of the peripheral devices. Hence, both the peripheral devices and the modules can receive electrical power AND data. This feature is not disclosed, suggested, or taught by the prior art of record, including Shaklee and Smith.

The particular claim language in claims 1 and 29 require that the connection port extend from each of the modules for electrically connecting each module to an associated peripheral device. Also, the interface module selectively interfaces with the modules for routing data to an appropriate module and peripheral device. Further, the data communication cable transfers data between the interface module and a variety of devices. Finally, the modular connector transfers data between the modules and provides electrical power to at least one of the modules to facilitate communication with the peripheral devices and to provide electrical power to at least one of the peripheral devices.

Regarding independent claim 41, this claim specifically requires that *data* be transferred to both the modules AND an associated peripheral device. Also, claim 41 requires that at least one of the peripheral devices be directly connected to the data communication cable independent from the connection to an associated module. Both of these claimed features are not disclosed, suggested, or taught by the prior art of record, including Shaklee and Smith.

Claims 1, 29, and 41 are therefore believed allowable over the prior art of record, including Shaklee and Smith. The remaining claims depend from the novel features of one of the independent claims such that the remaining claims are also believed allowable.

The remaining references cited but not applied to the claims have been considered. Since the Examiner has apparently considered these references as less pertinent than the above discussed references, further discussion of the non-applied references, at this time, is considered unnecessary. However, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the subject patent application patentably define over all references of record either independently or in combination.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Application, as amended, is now presented in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully solicited. The Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-2789 for any fees or credit the account for any overpayment.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS, P.C.

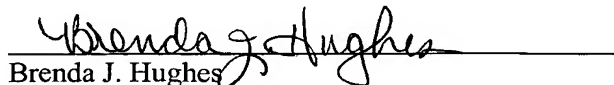


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that the attached **Amendment, return post card and fee** are being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to the **Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450**, on **March 22, 2005**.



Brenda J. Hughes